



8 March 2024

## **Medicine Supply Alert Notice**

### **Salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebuliser liquid unit dose vials - Update**

**Priority: Level 2\***

**Valid until: late June 2024**

#### **Issue**

1. The supply position of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebulisers has improved.
2. Salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebulisers will be in limited supply from mid-April until late June 2024.
3. Salbutamol 5mg/2.5ml nebulisers will remain available, however, cannot support an increase in demand.
4. Unlicensed supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebulisers can be sourced (see supporting information), lead times vary.
5. Alternative beta<sub>2</sub>-agonists for nebulisation and intravenous administration remain available, however, they cannot support an increase in demand.
6. Access to licensed salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebulisers will be actively monitored and prioritised for primary care and ambulance services who are less able to use unlicensed supplies.
7. **Please note that this MSAN supersedes the [National Patient Safety Alert \(NatPSA/2024/003/DHSC MVA\)](#) issued on 26 February 2024.**

#### **Advice and Actions**

8. All pharmacy procurement teams across primary and secondary care should:
  - ensure licensed supplies of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml and 5mg/2.5ml nebulisers are **only** ordered in line with historic demand. Orders will be monitored and excessive orders challenged; and
  - place orders with their usual wholesaler. Please ensure orders are not duplicated across multiple wholesalers or suppliers.
9. Additionally, Secondary care NHS provider pharmacy procurement teams should:
  - continue to place orders for unlicensed imports of salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml nebulisers to provide a buffer stock of 2-4 weeks cover to support during periods of limited supply (see Additional information).

## Additional Information

### Clinical information

- Salbutamol is a selective beta<sub>2</sub>-agonist providing short-acting (4-6 hour) bronchodilation with a fast onset (within 5 minutes) in reversible airways obstruction. The nebuliser liquids are licensed for use in the management of chronic bronchospasm unresponsive to conventional therapy, and in the treatment of acute severe asthma.
- In patients with mild to moderate asthma attacks or acute exacerbations of COPD, beta<sub>2</sub>-agonists can be considered for administration by repeated activations of a pressurised metered dose inhaler via an appropriate spacer (give one puff at a time; according to response, give another puff every 60 seconds up to maximum of 10 puffs), if appropriate. In acute-severe or life-threatening asthma, beta<sub>2</sub>-agonists should be administered by nebulisation

### Links to further information

- [SmPC: salbutamol nebuliser liquid](#)
- [BNF: salbutamol](#)
- [BNFC: salbutamol](#)
- [NICE guideline \[NG115\]: COPD](#)
- [BTS/SIGN guidance on the management of asthma](#)
- [BTS guidelines on the Management of Asthma](#)

### Guidance on ordering and prescribing unlicensed imports

- The following specialist importer(s) have confirmed they can source unlicensed supplies of **salbutamol 2.5mg/2.5ml (or 2.5mg/3ml) nebules** (please note there may be other companies that can also source supplies):

Importer	Salbutamol	MHRA letter of no objection	Lead time (once letter of no objection received)	Pack size	Ordering Instructions
Alium Medical	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 weeks	20	All enquiries on pricing/account opening/orders should be sent to: <a href="mailto:enquiries@aliummedical.com">enquiries@aliummedical.com</a>
Genetech Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Applied for	7-10 days	60	Send a purchase order directly to our order processing department at: <a href="mailto:orders@genetechpharma.co.uk">orders@genetechpharma.co.uk</a> . For pricing and availability inquiries, hospitals or pharmacies are encouraged to contact: <a href="mailto:sales@genetechpharma.co.uk">sales@genetechpharma.co.uk</a>
Mawdsley's	2.5mg/3ml	Received	2-3 weeks	25	Orders can be emailed to: <a href="mailto:unlicensed@mawdsleys.co.uk">unlicensed@mawdsleys.co.uk</a> or via EDI*

QMED Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	3 weeks	60	To order products, Trusts should send PDF purchase orders to: <a href="mailto:orders@qmedpharma.co.uk">orders@qmedpharma.co.uk</a> and <a href="mailto:unlicensed@qmedpharma.co.uk">unlicensed@qmedpharma.co.uk</a>
Smartway Pharma	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	next day delivery	20	Orders can be sent via email or GHX^ to our email address: <a href="mailto:ulm@smartwaypharma.co.uk">ulm@smartwaypharma.co.uk</a>
Tanner Pharma	2.5mg/3ml	Applied for	5-7 days	30	All orders can be placed via email to: <a href="mailto:fbrett@tannerpharma.com">fbrett@tannerpharma.com</a> above
Target Healthcare	2.5mg/2.5ml	Received	1-2 weeks	60	Orders via email to <a href="mailto:Hospitals@targethealthcare.co.uk">Hospitals@targethealthcare.co.uk</a> for Secondary Care and <a href="mailto:specials@target-healthcare.co.uk">specials@target-healthcare.co.uk</a> for Primary care

13. Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant regulatory, professional and Board guidance and local governance procedures. Please see the links below for further information:

- [The supply of unlicensed medicinal products](#), Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
- [Professional Guidance for the Procurement and Supply of Specials](#), Royal Pharmaceutical Society
- [Prescribing unlicensed medicines](#), General Medical Council (GMC)

### Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) website

14. The UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in conjunction with SPS have launched an online Medicines Supply Tool, which provides up to date information about medicine supply issues. To access the online Medicines Supply Tool you need to register with the [SPS website](#). Registration for access to the website is available to UK healthcare professionals and organisations providing NHS healthcare. The tool is located under the Tools tab and then click on the Medicines Supply option.
15. We encourage prescribers, pharmacy professionals, and pharmacy procurement leads in Scotland to register with the SPS website and use its Medicine Supply Tool in order to stay up to date concerning medicines supply disruptions. Please be aware that while medicines supply issues will appear on the SPS website, some of the recommended actions may not always be appropriate / relevant within the Scottish context.

### Enquiries

16. Enquiries from Health Boards or healthcare professionals should be directed in the first instance to [PharmacyTeam@gov.scot](mailto:PharmacyTeam@gov.scot) (primary care) or [NSS.NHSSMedicineShortages@nhs.scot](mailto:NSS.NHSSMedicineShortages@nhs.scot) (secondary care).